



THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SENTINEL

SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78
NEWSLETTER OF THE QUIET PROFESSIONALS

THE LTC FRANK J. DALLAS CHAPTER

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MARCH 2014



Presidents Page

**SFA Chapter 78 Monthly Meeting
Gets A New Home**

Green Beret Foundation Plaque

Exploring China's Sichuan Province

SFA Chapter 78 Meeting



Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

The Green Beret Shooters Cup Team will have its first business meeting on Friday March 7 to begin planning for the 2014 event. Led by Director **Steve Cowen**, we will establish this years operating budget, fund raising events and add additional members to the operational team. At a later date the Los Angeles two time winning team, L.A.P.D. Blue will also meet with key team

members and offer suggestion on how to improve the event. **Jim Duffy** is already working on sponsors for the Fourth Annual GBSC having attended the SHOT Show in January where he spoke with previous sponsor and contacted new corporations.

Bruce Long is in the process of cementing our relationship with American Legion Post 291 for holding our monthly meetings. In this issue of the Sentinel are photographs from the February meeting at Post 291. Bruce's first major step in improving Chapter 78 is a huge success. And the food and service is excellent! Bruce is also working hard to increase our liaison with SF Company A of the 19th Group. We now have members who observed two parachute jumps and a third opportunity may be available in early April. More information will be provided at the March chapter meeting.

In this issue of the Sentinel is an article by **Kenn Miller** on his last vacation to China. Speaking and reading Chinese fluently allowed him to visit a wide range of venues that would be difficult for most tourists to do.

Article's like Kenn's add a lot of interest for our readers and I am always looking for members stories, SF training, missions or more personal. Members participation is what drives our chapter and more of your stories in the Sentinel will help increase interest in membership. Chris Martin's story about his SF Team in Beirut brought in two new chapter members. All that is required to get your story published is write it; 500 to 1500 words, a few photographs and email it to me (commanderlonny@aol.com). ♦

Lonny Holmes
Sentinel Editor

***"You have never lived until you have almost died.
For those who have fought for it, life has a
special flavor the protected will never know."***

ANONYMOUS, SPECIAL OPERATIONS ASSOCIATION MOTTO

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COVER PHOTO: Chapter 78 members at American Legion Post 291 for February 2014 meeting.

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| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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THE PRESIDENTS PAGE



Bruce Long
President SFA 78

PRESIDENTS COLUMN MARCH 2014

Our February meeting at the American Legion Post 291 was a big success and the lunch afterwards was great. Everyone who I talked to agreed, and voted, that we would now hold our monthly meetings at this location.

We have made inroads with our relationship with A/5/19. MSG Jim Foley is now the official liaison between our Chapter

and ALFA Company. We have been invited to not only attend their parachute jump on April 5th, but to be 'manifested' which will allow us to actually be in the aircraft (Chinook CH-47) during their parachute jump. As of right now, we have twelve (12) spaces (subject to change, depending on availability of A/C). As of the writing of this column the parachute jump may be executed either at Camp Pendleton or Los Alamitos.

Our guest speaker will be Steve Spriggs former Post 291 Commander who is going to give us an overview of the Post. Steve is a former Vietnam veteran who served with the 11th Armored Cav.

MSG Jim Foley will be attending our next Chapter meeting on March 8th at the American Legion Post 291 and will possibly give us an update plus a quick review on what the Alpha Company has been during 2013.

I'm also in the process of planning a social hour with ALFA Company and our Chapter, after the jump. This will be held at the 'Fiddlers Green Pub' located within walking distance of Anderson DZ. This event is tentatively planned at 1700 hrs and will be held in a banquet room where a buffet will be served along with a 'No Host Bar'. This event will be hosted by Richard Simonian and Chapter 78.

UNCLASSIFIED INTEL

SAN JOSE, Calif.—The attack began just before 1 a.m. on April 16, 2013, when someone slipped into an underground vault not far from a busy freeway and cut telephone cables.

Within half an hour, snipers opened fire on a nearby electrical substation. Shooting for 19 minutes, they surgically knocked out 17 giant transformers that funnel power to Silicon Valley. A minute before a police car arrived, the shooters disappeared into the night.

To avoid a blackout, electric-grid officials rerouted power around

the site and asked power plants in Silicon Valley to produce more electricity. *But it took utility workers 27 days to make repairs and bring the substation back to life.*

Nobody has been arrested or charged in the attack at PG&E Corp.'s Metcalf transmission substation. *It is an incident of which few Americans are aware. But one former federal regulator is calling it a terrorist act that, if it were widely replicated across the country, could take down the U.S. electric grid and black out much of the country.*

The attack was "the most significant incident of domestic terrorism involving the grid that has ever occurred" in the U.S., said Jon Wellinoff, who was chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission at the time. A spokesman for PG&E said the company takes all incidents seriously but declined to discuss the Metcalf event in detail for fear of giving information to potential copycats. "We won't speculate about the motives" of the attackers, added the spokesman, Brian Swanson. He said PG&E has increased security measures.

Utility executives and federal energy officials have long worried that the electric grid is vulnerable to sabotage. That is in part because the grid, which is really three systems serving different areas of the U.S., has failed when small problems such as trees hitting transmission lines created cascading blackouts.

One in 2003 knocked out power to 50 million people in the Eastern U.S. and Canada for days.

Many of the system's most important components sit out in the open, often in remote locations, protected by little more than cameras and chain-link fences. ♦

Bruce D Long
President
SGM, SF (Ret)
SFA Chapter 78
March 1, 2014



Gerri Long, SFC Boodaghian, Bruce Long, Bonnie and Richard Simonian at the SF Jump in Los Alamitos.



SFA CHAPTER 78 MONTHLY MEETING GETS A NEW HOME – AMERICAN LEGION NEWPORT HARBOR POST 291

- ① Voted to be Chapter 78's "new meeting" location.
- ② Chapter 78 President Bruce Long leading our meeting.
- ③ Brad Welker, "Tilt" Meyer and Bob Crebbs at American Legion Post 291.
- ④ Past President Lonny Holmes presenting Green Beret Shooters Cup Director Steve Cowan a SFA C-78 Plaque for three years of hard work.
- ⑤ Mike Keele, John Stryker "Tilt" Meyer, Richard Simonian and Tom Redfern Vice President giving their attention at the February meeting.
- ⑥ Mark Miller, SGT at Arms and Lee Martin secretary.
- ⑦ John Joyce Treasurer, Ed Barrett ROTC Coordinator, and Kenn Miller



GREEN BERET FOUNDATION PLAQUE



By John Stryker "Tilt" Meyer

Among the veteran hats that I wear is an ambassador of good will beret for the Green Beret Foundation.

It was in that capacity, during the Special Forces Association Chapter 78 Annual Christmas Party at the Bahia Corinthian Yacht Club in Corona Del Mar, where I had

the honor of presenting a Green Beret Foundation Plaque of Appreciation to the chapter for its three consecutive years of support to the foundation through its Annual Chapter Shooters Cup held in Corona.

As I stood before that distinguished gathering, I reflected back on the first meeting of Chapter 78 men with Green Beret Foundation Founder and wounded-in-action Green Beret, Aaron Anderson in 2010. He told us of his 2006 tour of duty in Afghanistan with the 7th Special Forces Group which ended abruptly when an IED exploded and severely wounded the young staff sergeant.

More importantly, he spoke of the critical needs for improved services to our wounded Green Berets after they are returned from the battlefield to stateside hospitals and care facilities. Aaron told us compelling stories of the cracks in services and common-sense needs that our wounded Green Berets needed during those painful months of recovery and recuperation that weren't provided by military hospitals or the VA.

We were stunned to learn of those needs for improved services to our wounded Green Berets and their families. Among the retired Green Berets in attendance was Steve Cowan, a medic who suggested putting together a competitive pistol shoot that is unique and distinct both in its requirements for skilled marksmanship combined with a rigorous and physically demanding shooting course.

Steve's pointed suggestion: "In combat, and in law enforcement, when you have to use your weapon, you're physical, you're moving. You're not just standing around on a static pistol range."

With that thought in mind, Steve and a core of Chapter volunteers put together a rigorous competition that Soldier of Fortune Magazine Publisher and former Green Beret Robert K. Brown described as "the most complex tactical combat shooting exercise I have ever seen."

Steve and his merry band of volunteers improved the competitive course each year, adding new shooting and physical challenges which seems to meet with competitors approval and lead to an increase in the number of participants each year. For the third competition there were more than 125 competitors and more prizes awarded than ever, thanks to Chapter Member and Vietnam-era Green Beret Jim Duffy.

Today, they are moving forward with plans for the fourth annual competition that will be held October 11 in Corona, where the title sponsor again will be the Veterans Affordable Housing Program, also lead by a team of Green Berets, including Richard Simonian, an original SF soldier from 1953 – 56.

During the banquet presentation I reminded everyone of the Green Beret Foundation's mission and recounted how I had the honor of being the master of ceremonies for the first Green Beret Foundation fundraiser in San Antonio, Texas, where I met wounded Green Beret medic Roland Paquette and his Jennifer, the

foundation's vice president and chief operations officer. Roland lost both legs above the knees in Afghanistan in 2005, as a 3rd Special Forces Group medic.

I told of the poignant success stories that the Green Beret Foundation has written by helping today's Green Berets and their families.

With more than 1,500 Green Berets wounded and more than 350 killed in action since 9/11, the need for the Green Beret Foundation will grow as will the need for continued support by organizations across our country. But, few have put in the amount of blood, sweat and hard labor than the men of Chap 78 have committed to this sacred mission. ♦





EXPLORING CHINA'S SICHUAN PROVINCE



By Kenn Miller

Because Mainland China was denied territory during the Vietnam War and afterwards when I was a student in Taiwan, no matter how often I visit, each trip seems a little bit like a reconnaissance mission.

This is especially true when traveling to places off the beaten tourist track, like the interior of Sichuan Province. A while back, my wife and I took ten friends on a two week bus trip to this area.

Sichuan Province is known worldwide for its fiery cuisine, and in China it is every bit as famous for its scenery, its history, its mix of Han, Qiang, and Tibetan people, its pandas, and the fiery tempers of its women. The provincial capital, Chengdu is situated on a fertile plain with more than 4,000 years of known human habitation. Chengdu and its immediately surrounding area has a population of a mere 14,000,000, and by the standards of Chinese cities it seems rather uncrowded and leisurely. We did not spend much time in the city, but we did visit the Chengdu



Indolent pandas at Chengdu Panda Breeding and Research Base



Ralph Timmons (left) and Kenn Miller (right) pose for a photo with a Chinese tourist while visiting "Flower Lake."

Panda Breeding and Research Base which is about the only place on the trip we encountered other foreign visitors, as well as many Chinese visitors. The pandas were far less impressed by the humans than the humans were by the pandas.

Outside of Chengdu we were soon in an area of forested mountains and furiously rushing rivers and streams. In 2008 this area was struck by an 8.0 earthquake that killed as many as 87,000 people and did massive damage to roads, bridges, and buildings. The rebuilding we saw was impressive. The population of the areas we visited were a mix of Han Chinese, Tibetans, and members of the Qiang ethnicity. We saw no signs of ethnic tension, but foreign travel in this area was tightly controlled, and at one point we were temporarily and politely detained while the police figured out which other police agency had cleared us to visit. We visited the famous (to Chinese) scenic areas of Emei Mountain, the Yibin Bamboo Park, and Jiushaigou National Park, and got in some hiking on Yellow Dragon Mountain. In the 1930s, during the "Long March," Communist and Nationalist armies and their allied warlord and tribal militias moved and fought in these rugged mountain areas, and the three members of our group who had been soldiers couldn't help feeling deep sympathy for those on all sides who moved and fought and died here. Some of the famous sites of the "Long March" were still marked, but the site of the Red Army's legendary crossing of the Dadu River under fire is no longer visible from the reconstructed road because this once glorious action has been widely exposed as a propaganda myth.

In Sichuan, the eastern slopes of the Himalayan foothills meet a wide area of grasslands. Tibetan herders and cowboys graze their yaks and sheep and horses on some of these grasslands, but in other places – as the Red Army discovered in the 1930s – what appears to be grass on solid ground is grass on dark water. Crossing these grasslands under constant harassment from Tibetan monastery militias made the communist soldiers wish they were back in the mountains.

While visiting a section of these grasslands called "Flower Lake" 1st Sgt. (retired) Ralph Timmons and I encountered a comfortably bawdy looking lady from nearby Gansu Province, who was wearing Ralph's terminal rank on her hat, and was well dressed to pose with a couple of former 101st troopers. *Saving Private Ryan* and *Band of Brothers* are popular DVD movies in the wild west of China, and this tourist lady from Gansu was one of a handful of people I saw wearing the Screaming Eagle patch in Sichuan, but the only one wearing wings and CIB and US Army tape.

Modern China can be a very strange place. Next trip we'd like to take some SF along. ♦

COMPANY A OF THE 19TH SPECIAL FORCES PARACHUTE JUMP

FEBRUARY 9, 2014 · LOS ALAMITOS, CA

Photos By Geri Long



- 1 SF A Company Sign
- 2 Ground Control and Safety Officers for the jump
- 3 SF jumpers loading the CH-47
- 4 Sergeant Major Beetham and Richard Simonian
- 5 "All 'chutes open"
- 6 Richard Simonian with Captain Trent
- 7 Equipment nearly on the ground with the jumper ready for a P.L.F.
- 8 Three landing on the L.Z at Los Alamitos





SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION CHAPTER 78 MEETING

SATURDAY MARCH 8, 2014 • 1000hrs

American Legion Post 291, 215 15th Street, Newport Beach, CA 92663



GUEST SPEAKERS

Steve Spriggs

Former Post 291 Commander and Vietnam veteran, Steve Spriggs will present an overview of the Post.

Master Sergeant Jim Foley A Company

19th Special Forces Group

MSG Foley will give a presentation regarding the 19th and his "new" official assignment as liaison to Chapter 78.

Lunch can be ordered from the Legion cafe immediately following. Be early for parking is limited.

SPECIAL SPEAKER FOR APRIL CHAPTER MEETING



Dr. Eric V. Larson, PhD., of Rand Corporation

Dr. Eric V. Larson PhD., a senior policy researcher at the RAND Corporation and a professor at the Pardee RAND Graduate School, will be our guest speaker at the April Chapter 78 meeting. Dr. Larson has worked with SF at high echelon levels and will provide valuable background information on current aspects of our on going problems in the middle east.

Dr. Larson's research focus includes:

- jihadist strategy, ideology, propaganda, and discourse
- influence operations, strategic communications, and information operations
- irregular warfare
- American and foreign attitudes toward U.S. military operations
- media and public opinion, and
- and social science approaches to national security analysis.

**Chapter members
should plan
to attend this
important
presentation.**

Prior to joining RAND, he worked as a policy and systems analyst for the National Security Council. Larson received his A.B. in political science from the University of Michigan and his M.Phil. and Ph.D. in policy analysis from the Pardee RAND Graduate School.